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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to examine the influence of parents' attitudes toward and use of media on their college-age children's media use and attitudes. Telephone interviews were conducted with 400 university students in the Northeast, and a questionnaire was sent to their parents. Both instruments measured media use variables, attitudes toward the media, and background information, including amount of family political discussion and activity, parental control over television viewing, and influence on newspaper and magazine reading. The results showed that student attitudes about the media could be predicted from the parents' media attitudes and from their behavior, or media use, for the same medium and for different media. Students' behavior, or media use, could also be predicted from parents' media attitudes as well as their behavior, for the same medium and for different media. Thus, both parents' attitudes and their behavior must be considered when predicting their influence on their children's media attitudes and use. (The questionnaire used in the study is appended.) (HTH)

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**PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON STUDENT VALUES, ATTITUDES
TOWARD AND USE OF THE MASS MEDIA**

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**PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON STUDENT VALUES, ATTITUDES
TOWARD AND USE OF THE MASS MEDIA**

Parents' influence on children's use of the mass media has been a continuing issue of interest to many researchers. Since a child's first experiences with the mass media occur at home, it is not unreasonable to assume that his or her media use behaviors or patterns are in part a product of the socialization process.

The present study compared college students and their parents, with respect to attitudes toward the media and mass media use. We also used parental and family characteristics to predict student media use and attitudes. Such comparisons were considered valuable for several reasons: as far as we know, a comparison between this age group and their parents has not yet been made. It is particularly important to look at this age group because it is plausible that by this age, their patterns of media use are relatively well established and are in part the result of whatever family influences may have been exerted in the preceding stage, while the child was still living at home.

Second, while students' media use patterns may differ from parents' because of the unique aspects and demands of the college environment, the orientations toward media use at this stage may result from parental influences.

Third, there is some evidence that adult role behaviors observationally acquired by young children may not necessarily be performed until a child reaches adulthood (Maccoby, 1959).

Parental Influences and Media Use.

Two classic studies on parents' influences on children's media use found correlations between children's and parents' media behavior (Himmelweit, et al. 1958; Schramm, Lyle and Parker, 1961). Both studies, which found similar patterns of TV viewing and print use, attributed the results to modeling or parental example. Indirect support for such a modeling hypothesis also has been provided by studies showing similar media behavior among children of equal economic status or educational level, and similarly for parents (Geiger and Sokol, 1959; Greenberg and Dervin, 1970, 1973). Industry studies also report similar findings. Studies done by the Newspaper Advertising Bureau (1977, 1978, 1979) consistently have shown that people who had newspapers in the home as children were more likely to be newspaper readers and subscribers as adults. Clarke (1969) found that increased father-son identification increased father-son similarities in some measures of reading behavior.

A similar pattern has been found for TV news viewing. Egan (1978) surveyed elementary school age children on their news viewing patterns and found that children who said their parents frequently watched news reported being high or medium news watchers. She also found a relationship between discussion of news at home and more frequent news watching by the child. A more recent study (Conway, et al., 1981) also found similar positive correlations between parent and child's print and electronic news media use. In these studies cited, the children were of elementary school age which may help to account for media use similarities.

However, questions also have been raised about the modeling hypothesis. Chaffee, McLeod and Atkin (1971) showed only modest correlations between adolescents' and parents' media use. The authors compared parents and their adolescent children on amount of general TV time, amount of TV entertainment or viewing, TV news time, newspaper and magazine reading measures and interest in public affairs materials.

They found modest correlations for all of their measures, the highest of which was for TV time (self-estimate of the number of hours spent watching TV per day) and they pointed out this could be due to opportunity rather than influence.

Clarke (1969) also suggested that as an alternative to direct modeling, reverse modeling is plausible, i.e., a child's media use might affect his parents. Comstock et al., (1978) reported evidence for this in the area of TV program selection.

Rather than solely concentrating on direct comparisons between parent-child specific media use measures, we also decided to look at comparisons on attitudes and norms or values. Previous socialization studies which concentrated primarily on frequency of media use and on content preferences seem to ignore much evidence that use and content preferences will vary with age or life-cycle stages or a host of other variables. These differences have been well documented in TV viewing (Comstock, et al., 1978), exposure to news and public affairs (Schramm et al., 1961; Jennings and Niemi, 1968a), comic book preferences (Wolfe and Fiske, 1949), and newspaper reading (ANPA, 1977). These differences appear to be dictated by ability, interests and available time, in

addition to a host of demographic variables.

Two family background variables of interest in this study that would reflect a value orientation were amount of parental political activity and amount of family political discussion. It was expected that both behaviors indicate civic or political interest which requires maintenance of certain information levels. This could in turn translate into similar behavior patterns or orientations among the children. Some evidence exists to support this. Chaffee, McLeod and Wackman (1973) looked at family communication patterns and political socialization. They found that in families where discussion was encouraged and the child was exposed to controversial ideas ("pluralistic" families), parents showed the highest political interest, activity, knowledge, and levels of voting. Children of such parents also tended to be most politicized and were similar to their parents on media exposure measures (particularly to news and public affairs content).

Second, as Roberts (1973) contends, "A general value orientation (may be) communicated to children during socialization which may affect children's media use." Chaffee, et al., (1971) alluded to this when they evaluated the impact of family communication patterns on media use. They found that in "pluralistic" homes where the child is exposed to controversial ideas, and where self-expression is encouraged, adolescents gave more attention to media news reports and spent relatively little time with television. Adolescents from homes where the norm was getting along well with others and where the child was not encouraged to express dissent tended to be heavy TV users and showed little interest

in news. Clarke (1965) found that children from families that were child-centered or showed high intellectual concern were more likely to be exposed to educational television and leisure-time reading.

This value orientation as it affects media use also has been demonstrated in the area of children's use of information from commercials (Wackman *et al.*, 1977).

Given that it was not unreasonable to expect that college students' media use patterns would differ from those of their parents, we looked at the similarity in value orientations between student and parent on a news norm measure, similarity in attitudes toward the media, and how these orientations as well as parental media use and family characteristics contributed to the students' media behaviors.

The News Norm.

The value of keeping informed always has been an important value in this society. The importance of this value has implications for various behaviors including exposure to the mass media. In line with determining whether such a norm exists in practice, and to measure its strength, McCombs and Poindexter (1978) developed a news norm scale adapted from a civic norm scale (Campbell, Gurin and Miller, 1954). The news norm included the following items:

- A. "We all have a duty to keep ourselves informed about news and current events."
- B. "It is important to be informed about news and current events."
- C. "So many other people follow the news and keep informed about it that it doesn't matter much whether I do or not."
- D. "A good deal of news about current events isn't important enough to keep informed about."

Developmental work on this scale indicated that the norm was indeed measuring one concept and that the items conformed to Guttman Scale criteria.¹ Having established that these items scaled, McCombs and Poindexter then examined its relationship to newspaper reading. They corroborated their hypothesis that those who scored high on the scale would be more frequent newspaper readers. They also found the norm to be a good predictor of national TV news exposure, although it was marginal in its prediction of exposure to local news.

That this news norm can discriminate on an individual's use of the media then raised a question we addressed in this paper: is this value of keeping informed transmitted from parent to child?

Media attitudes.

A second level on which children and parents may be compared is in their attitudes toward the media. Evaluation measures were taken on both students' and parents' opinions of the job different media are doing in covering the news. An additional television measure was taken assessing their attitude toward viewing a lot of television (on a harmful-beneficial scale). While there is evidence suggesting that attitudes toward the media influence media use (McCombs and Einsiedel, 1981; Cobbey, 1978; McCombs, 1976; Greenberg and Roloff, 1974), the question remains whether such attitudes are transmitted from parent to child. We do not have direct evidence of such transmission, but similarities in content preferences have been found, and these may provide

¹Based on a sample of 2512, the coefficient of reproducibility for this scale was .9242 while the coefficient of scalability was .7226 (McCombs and Poindexter 1978).

indirect evidence of parental socialization, if one assumes that behavior (attending to specific preferred content) is a manifestation of one's attitudes (Bem, 1967). Given that the evidence on similarities of program and reading preferences between parents and children appears inconclusive (Chaffee, et al., 1971; Clarke, 1968; Prisuta, 1978; Jennings and Niemi, 1968b), and given the findings from numerous studies that content preferences appear to vary according to demographic, lifestyle and other variables, we felt it would be fruitful in addition to make comparisons on the basis of broader attitudinal dimensions.

Methodology

About 400 telephone interviews were conducted with a systematic random sample of registered students at a private university in a medium sized city in the Northeast, over a five-day period in the fall of 1980. The completion rate for the sample was 76%. A mail questionnaire was sent to the parents of the students for whom interviews were completed, alternately asking the mother or father to respond. About 79% of the parents did respond, but in part due to broken homes, more mothers than fathers responded (58% mothers, 42% fathers).

Aside from format, the student and parent instruments were identical, focusing on the presidential election, media use variables, attitudes toward the media, and a news norm scale created by summing the scores on the four McCombs and Poindexter (1978) items, measured on five-point Likert-type scales from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The instruments also measured parental or family-type background information, including amount of family political discussion, amount of political activity, parental control over TV viewing, and influence on newspaper reading, parents' degree of economic and social liberalism, along with the usual demographic characteristics (see Appendix A for a partial listing of the items used).

Zero-order correlations between parent and student media attitudes and media use patterns on the same variables were examined. Second, parent/family characteristics, media use, and attitudes generally were correlated with students' media use and attitudes. Third, multiple regression techniques were used to determine the best predictors of student media attitudes and media use. Finally, canonical correlation analyses were conducted in an attempt to reduce the large number of variables to a manageable and interpretable number.

Results

Looking first at the identical item correlations between parents and students on attitudes toward the media, and media usage, while none of the media use measures were significantly correlated, three of six attitudes measures were (Table 1). Among the attitude measures, the radio news rating, newspaper rating, and opinion that viewing a lot of TV is either harmful or beneficial were positively correlated for parents and students. The news norm, TV news rating and newsmagazine rating were not correlated. None of the media use measures, either generally, such as hours of TV viewing, or news-related, such as days per week of

Table 1

Parent & Student Scores on Media Attitudes and Use
Zero-Order Pearson Correlations

	News Norm	TV News rating	Newsmagazine rating	Radio news rating	Newspaper rating	TV is harmful/ beneficial		
Attitudes	-.00	.02	.04	.10*	.10*	.14*		
	Hrs. TV viewing	Days TV news	Hrs. Radio listening	Radio news	General newspaper	News section newspaper	# Magazines read	# Newsmagazines read
Media Use	.06	.09	.01	.08	-.01	-.03	.09	.11

*p. $\leq$.05, 1-tail. Ns for each pair of variables range from 192 to 314.

TV news viewing, were correlated (Table 1).

Next, turning to simple correlations between parent or family characteristics and student media use and attitudes generally, parent age was positively correlated with student newspaper news section readership, and magazines read.

Parent opinions on viewing a lot of TV were correlated with student opinions on the same item, and also with student hours of TV viewing. Hence, if parents thought a lot of TV viewing was beneficial, students watched a lot of TV (Table 2).

The number of magazines regularly read by students was positively associated with a conservative economic position on the part of their parents, in addition to being positively associated with parent age, and increased news norm scores by the parents, and negatively associated with parent income level.

The number of newsmagazines read regularly by students was positively associated with: amount of parent political activity, amount of family political discussion, favorable TV news rating by parents, and parents' opinion of the amount of influence they exerted on student newspaper reading habits (Table 2).

Student TV news rating was positively associated with amount of TV news viewing by the parent, and negatively associated with parent age.

To go beyond these simple, zero-order correlations, we used the Stepwise Multiple Regression procedure in the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) computer package. Each student media use and attitude measure was independently entered in stepwise models with up to six independent variables, using maximum R^2 improvement as the criterion

Table 2

Parent/Family Characteristics and Students' Media Use and Ratings
Zero-Order Pearson Correlations

	Parent/Family										
	Liberal economic classification	Political activity	Political discussion	TV news viewing	TV news rating	Newspaper influence	TV effects	Income	Age	Parent norm	Newspaper rating
Students											
Days read daily	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.13	--	--	--
News section	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.19	.20	--	--
# magazines	-.11*	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.17	.13	.12	--
# news magazines	--	.23	.16	--	.19	.14	--	--	--	--	--
TV news rating	--	--	--	.11	--	--	--	--	-.27	--	--
News mag. rating	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.15	--	--
Radio news rating	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.13
Newspaper rating	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.10
TV harmful/ beneficial	--	--	--	--	--	--	.14	--	-.24	--	--
Hrs. TV viewing	--	--	--	--	--	--	.19	--	--	--	--
TV news viewing	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.17	--	--

* All reported correlations have a probability of $\leq .05$, 2-tailed.

-- not significant at the $p. \leq .05$ level, 2-tailed. Sample sizes ranged from 235 to 314.

for inclusion in the models. The independent measures came from the parent/family socio-demographic measures, parent attitudes and media use items.

Predicting Student Media Attitudes.

Addressing the attitude variables first, parents' age was the most consistent predictor of students' attitudes. It was negatively associated with: student's newspaper rating; TV news rating; newsmagazine rating; and positively associated with students' position on the "viewing a lot of TV is harmful" variable. Hence, students with older parents were more negative in their ratings of these media. In each of these four models, parents' age was the single best predictor of students' attitudes (Table 3). Returning to the simple correlation matrix, students' age was correlated with only one of these four-viewing a lot of TV is harmful. Hence parents' age is not merely reflecting a relationship that is due to students' age.

The best, and only, predictor of students' radio news rating was parents' radio news rating.

Parents' report of their influence on offsprings' newspaper reading habits was a significant predictor of offsprings' newspaper rating (Table 3).

Higher parental TV news viewing predicted higher student TV news ratings, and lower student news norm values. Parents' economic liberalism predicted students' TV news rating, and the students' attitude that "viewing a lot of TV is beneficial". Hence offspring of more economically conservative parents were more likely to say that viewing a lot of

Table 3

Predicting Student Scores on Attitude Variables¹

<u>Viewing a lot of TV is Harmful</u>			<u>Student TV News Rating</u>		
Predictor Variable ²	Partial F	Probability	Predictor Variable	Partial F	Probability
1. Parent's age (+) ²	14.4	.0002	1. Parent's Age (-)	19.3	.0001
2. News norm (+)	8.2	.005	2. Economic liberalism (+)	4.1	.05
3. TV control (+)	5.8	.02	3. TV news viewing (+)	3.9	.05
4. TV harmful (+)	5.6	.02			
5. # newsmagazines (+)	4.9	.03			
6. Economic liberalism (-)	4.1	.04			

Model $R^2 = .28$, $F = 8.49$, $p. = .0001$

Model $R^2 = .19$, $F = 5.3$, $p. = .0001$

<u>Student Newsmagazine Rating</u>			<u>Student Radio News Rating</u>		
Predictor Variable	Partial F	Probability	Predictor Variable	Partial F	Probability
1. Age (-)	5.45	.02	1. Radio news rating (+)	5.85	.02
2. TV viewing (-)	4.65	.03			
3. TV harmful (-)	4.02	.05			

Model $R^2 = .11$, $F = 2.91$, $p. = .01$

Model $R^2 = .06$, $F = 2.85$, $p. = .04$

¹Using the stepwise regression procedure in SAS, with a maximum of 6 independent variables, and maximum R^2 improvement as the criterion for inclusion in the models. Reported Model R^2 s and F statistics are from the full 6 variable model of best predictors, but only those variables with significant ($p. \leq .05$) Partial Fs are reported.

²All predictor variables are measured on Parents.

³The direction of the relationship is indicated in parentheses.

Table 3 (Cont'd)

Predicting Student Scores on Attitude Variables¹

<u>Student's Newspaper Rating</u>			<u>Student's News Norm</u>		
Predictor Variable ²	Partial F	Probability	Predictor Variable	Partial F	Probability
1. Age (-) ³	14.3	.0002	1. # newsmagazines (+)	11.2	.001
2. Political discussion (-)	5.9	.02	2. # magazines (-)	8.8	.004
3. Newspaper influence (+)	4.3	.04	3. TV news (-)	5.1	.03
4. TV viewing (-)	4.0	.05	4. Radio listening (-)	4.2	.04

Model $R^2 = .18$, $F = 5.11$, $p = .0001$ Model $R^2 = .13$, $F = 3.25$, $p = .005$

¹Using the stepwise regression procedure in SAS, with a maximum of 6 independent variables, and maximum R^2 improvement as the criterion for inclusion in the models. Reported Model R^2 s and F statistics are from the full 6 variable model of best predictors, but only those variables with significant ($p \leq .05$) Partial Fs are reported.

²All predictor variables are measured on Parents.

³The direction of the relationship is indicated in parentheses.

TV is harmful (Table 3).

Parents' position on the question of whether "viewing a lot of TV is harmful" contributed to the prediction of students' position on that item. Higher general TV viewing by parents led to more negative newspaper and newsmagazine ratings by students.

Predicting Student Media Use.

Turning to the predictors of students' media use, degree of parental control over TV viewing while the student was growing up is associated with lower TV viewing by the student at present. This TV control variable also was a negative predictor of radio listening by the student (Table 4).

Increased TV news viewing reported by the parent predicted increased student TV news viewing (Table 5), and also lead to lower daily news section readership by the student (Table 5).

Amount of political activity by the parent was the best predictor of amount of TV viewing by students (Table 4), and amount of family political discussion was the best predictor of student newsmagazine reading, and radio news listening (Table 5).

Parents' rating of newsmagazines significantly predicted the number of magazines read by their offspring (Table 4).

A canonical correlation analysis was conducted entering all of the aforementioned parent/family variables in the independent list, with all of the student variables in the dependent list. One significant ($p = .03$) canonical variate was identified, and selecting variables with a loading of .3 or greater reduced the model to five independent and six

Table 4

Predicting Student Scores on General Media Use Variables¹

<u>Student's General TV Viewing</u>			<u>Student's General Radio Listening</u>		
Predictor Variable ²	Partial F	Probability	Predictor Variable	Partial F	Probability
1. Political activity (+) ³	6.4	.01	1. TV control (-)	3.8	.05
2. TV control (-)	5.3	.02	Model R ² = .08, F = 2.1, p. = .06		
3. Newspaper reading (+)	5.0	.03			
Model R ² = .15, F = 3.91, p. = .001					
<u>Student's # of Magazines</u>			<u>Student's General Newspaper Reading</u>		
Predictor Variable	Partial F	Probability	Predictor Variable	Partial F	Probability
1. Income (-)	6.0	.02	1. Newspaper influence (+)	5.3	.02
2. Age (+)	4.7	.03	2. Income (-)	4.8	.03
3. Newsmagazine rating (+)	4.0	.05	Model R ² = .09, F = 2.87, p. = .02		
Model R ² = .17, F = 4.78, p. = .0002					

¹Using the stepwise regression procedure in SAS, with a maximum of 6 independent variables, and maximum R² improvement as the criterion for inclusion in the models. Reported Model R²s and F statistics are from the full 6 variable model of best predictors, but only those variables with significant (p. $\leq$.05) Partial Fs are reported.

²All predictor variables are measured on Parents.

³The direction of the relationship is indicated in parentheses.

Table 5

Predicting Student Scores on News Media Use Variables¹

<u>Student's TV News Frequency</u>			<u>Student's Radio News Frequency</u>		
Predictor Variable ²	Partial F	Probability	Predictor Variable	Partial F	Probability
1. Age (+) ³	6.8	.01	1. Political discussion (+)	4.6	.04
2. Radio listening (-)	5.0	.03	2. Newspaper reading (+)	4.5	.04
3. TV news viewing (+)	3.5	.06	3. Current events reading (+)	3.9	.05
Model $R^2 = .14$, $F = 3.2$, $p = .006$			Model $R^2 = .09$, $F = 2.05$, $p = .06$		
<u>Newsmagazine Frequency</u>			<u>Student's Daily News Section Frequency</u>		
Predictor Variable	Partial F	Probability	Predictor Variable	Partial F	Probability
1. Political discussion (+)	9.4	.003	1. TV news viewing (-)	8.2	.005
2. Newspaper rating (+)	6.6	.01	2. Income (-)	4.2	.04
3. Economic liberalism (-)	5.4	.02	3. Newspaper rating (+)	4.2	.04
4. TV viewing (+)	4.5	.04	Model $R^2 = .15$, $F = 3.9$, $p = .001$		
Model $R^2 = .18$, $F = 3.91$, $p = .001$					

¹Using the stepwise regression procedure in SAS, with a maximum of 6 independent variables, and maximum R^2 improvement as the criterion for inclusion in the models. Reported Model R^2 s and F statistics are from the full 6 variable model of best predictors, but only those variables with significant ($p \leq .05$) Partial Fs are reported.

²All predictor variables are measured on Parents.

³The direction of the relationship is indicated in parentheses.

dependent variables (Table 6).

The following independent variables had strong positive loadings on the canonical variate: parents' amount of newspaper reading, professed influence over child's newspaper reading, parents' education, and news norm. The positively loaded dependent variables were: TV news rating, radio news listening, and number of newsmagazines read. The sole negatively loaded independent variable was amount of newspaper news section readership, while among the dependent variables, TV news viewing, radio listening, and the attitude that viewing a lot of TV is beneficial were all negatively correlated (Table 6).

In summing up the findings of this analysis, the canonical variate may be identified as print and information-oriented. Parental variables such as newspaper reading, news norm, education and influence over students' newspaper reading are positively associated with the canonical variate, while students' TV news viewing, attitude toward a lot of TV viewing, and radio listening were negatively associated. Number of newsmagazines read by the students was positively loaded on the variate, as was their TV news rating, and radio news listening. While we cannot say for example, that there is a direct negative relationship between parents' newspaper reading and students, TV news viewing (and indeed going back to the simple correlations, there is not), we may conclude that they are inversely correlated with the underlying factor, identified as a print and information-oriented canonical variate. Thus, parents' newspaper reading (and education, etc.) is positively correlated with the print and information variate, while

Table 6
Canonical Correlation Analysis
For All Variables

Independent Variables (Parents)		Dependent Variables (Students)	
	Loading		Loading
Newspaper Reading	+ .81	TV News Viewing	- .42
Newspaper News section	- .87	TN News Rating	+ .59
Newspaper influence	+ .51	"A lot of TV is beneficial"	- .68
Education	+ .62	Radio News listening	+ .43
News Norm	+ .49	Radio listening	- .32
		Newsmagazine reading	+ .41

$R_c = .90$, Eigenvalue = .81, Bartlett's Chi-Square = 371 with 322 d.f., $p = .03$

students' TV news viewing is negatively associated with that same variate.

The high positive loading for students' TV news rating coupled with the negative loading for their TV news watching is difficult to explain. Perhaps it is due to the negative attitude toward viewing a lot of TV, which would inhibit TV news viewing despite a favorable attitude. Alternatively it may be due to students' lifestyle, which may not provide much opportunity for TV news viewing despite a favorable attitude toward same. Another problem with the independent variable list is the coupling of a high general newspaper reading loading, with a strong negative loading for readership of the news section. As one would expect, these variables were highly correlated. Yet a t-test indicated that the means for the two variables differed (mean number of days of weekly newspaper reading versus mean number of days of weekly newspaper news reading) and hence they are tapping different behaviors. The frequency of specific news section readership is not necessarily the same as frequency of general newspaper readership.

Nonetheless, the canonical correlation procedure did reduce the large group of variables to a single canonical variate. It appears that parents' characteristics and behaviors are correlated with students' attitudes and behaviors on this print and information dimension. And again we see that the socialization process involves parental behavior with one medium (newspaper) affecting students' behavior with other media (TV, radio and newsmagazines).

Other canonical correlation analyses were conducted, first, using only the behavioral variables and then only the attitudinal variables.

With only the behavioral variables included in the analysis, no significant canonical variates were identified. Using just the parents' attitudes and students' attitudes however, a "positive broadcast" factor emerged (Table 7). The independent list consisted of a negative loading for newsmagazine rating, and positive loading for radio news rating. The dependent list likewise consisted of a negative loading for newsmagazine rating, and positive loading for radio news rating. In addition, there were positive loadings for the attitude that viewing a lot of TV is beneficial, and for the students' news norm. Here again we have evidence that attitudes as well as behaviors are part of the socialization process, and it is not sufficient simply to look at behavioral variables.

Summary and Discussion

Three different means of predicting student media attitudes from parents' attitudes and behaviors have been supported by the results:

- o Using parents' attitudes to predict student attitudes toward the same medium.
- o Using parents' behavior to predict student attitudes toward the same medium.
- o Using parents' behavior to predict student attitudes toward different media.

An example of using parents' attitudes on similar items is that of parents' radio news rating being the sole significant predictor of students' radio news rating. Also, parents' position on the question of whether "viewing a lot of TV is harmful" predicted students' position on the same question.

Table 7

Canonical Correlation Analysis
Attitude Measures Only

Independent Variables (Parents)		Dependent Variables (Students)	
	Loading		Loading
Newsmagazine Rating	-.53	Newsmagazine Rating	-.47
Radio News Rating	+.59	Radio News Rating	+.67
		News Norm	+.40
		Attitude that a lot of TV viewing is beneficial	+.62

$R_c = .33$, Eigenvalue = .11, Bartlett's Chi-Square = 65, with 48 d.f., $p = .049$.

As example of using parents' behavior on similar items to predict student attitudes was in the area of TV news, where parents' TV news viewing frequency predicted students' TV new rating. Also, parents' professed influence over the newspaper reading habits of the students predicted amount of newspaper reading by students.

An example of using parents' behavior on dissimilar items to predict students' attitudes is that of television viewing, where higher parental television viewing predicted lower newspaper ratings, and lower newsmagazine rating by the students.

In addition, parental attitudes on dissimilar items predicted student attitudes, although here the links are less clear. For example, parents who were more liberal on economic issues had offspring who rated TV news more favorably, and who thought that TV viewing generally was more beneficial.

Similarly, three means of predicting student media use from parent or family variables have been supported by the findings:

- o Using parents' behavior to predict student behavior with the same medium.
- o Using parents' behavior to predict student behavior with different media.
- o Using parents' attitudes to predict student behavior with the same medium.

An example of using parents' behavior on a similar item is that of using amount of parents' TV news viewing to predict students' TV news viewing behavior.

For using parents' behavior on dissimilar items, amount of newspaper current events reading by students varied inversely with the amount of

TV news viewing on the part of parents.

In line with the third point above, using parents' attitudes on similar items, parents' rating of newsmagazines was found to predict students' newsmagazine readership.

Thus, students' attitudes were predicted by using parents' attitudes and behaviors in the same area, and their behavior in different, but related areas. Students' behaviors were predicted using parents' attitudes and behaviors in the same area, and in related but different areas.

There are two things that are particularly noteworthy in these findings, beyond the obvious value in finding evidence for socialization. First, attitudinal as well as behavioral independent measures are essential. Second, parental attitudes and behaviors related to one medium can influence students' attitudes and behaviors regarding different media. For example, parents' use of television and attitudes toward viewing TV was related to students' attitudes toward the print media. The more parents viewed television and TV news and the more they said that viewing a lot of TV was beneficial, the more negative were students' ratings of newspaper and newsmagazine coverage.

These students were also likely to watch television more frequently and to hold the same attitude about viewing a lot of television. We already know that a person's use of one medium may affect their use of other media (e.g., a person who views a lot of TV may be low on print use); the similarity in the use of and attitudes toward the same medium between parent and child also may not be surprising. What is

interesting, however, is that parents' use of and attitudes toward one medium seems to affect a child's use of and attitudes toward other media. There is thus evidence that socialization of media use and attitudes occur within the same medium and among different media.

Additional evidence comes from the canonical correlation analysis, where we found that parents' newspaper reading and influence over their children's newspaper reading were positively loaded independent variables, while children's TV news viewing and attitude that viewing a lot of TV is beneficial were negatively loaded dependent variables, and number of newsmagazines read was a positively loaded dependent variable. One could interpret this as high newspaper reading by parents resulting in high newsmagazine readership, low TV news viewing, and a negative attitude toward viewing a lot of TV, on the part of students.

Not only was there no correlation between parents' and students' news norm scores, but neither parents' norm nor students' norm were correlated with students' attitudes or behaviors. The sole exceptions to this were 1) a significant simple correlation between parents' news norm and number of magazines read regularly by students -- but parents' news norm did not contribute to the regression model predicting number of magazines read by students -- and 2) parents' news norm as a predictor in the regression equation for students' attitude toward viewing a lot of television.

An explanation for this lack of effects may lie in the components of the news norm scale, which require further refinement (Olsen, 1981), and additionally may be explained by the population under study. That is,

it is possible that the college experience itself may have an effect on further development of the news norm. The classic Bennington study by Newcomb (1958) which found ideological changes in college students as they progressed through the college years provides some support for this. McCombs and Mullins (1973) in studying a college sample also found that among the consequences of increased education were increased media exposure and political interest.

Parents' attitudes were more consistent predictors of both students' attitudes and students' behavior than was parental behavior. These findings support the notion that attitude variables are important and should be considered in examining the media socialization process. Just using parents' media use to predict children's media use overlooks an important component of the family socialization process, a fact that may explain low correlations in previous research.

The present study's success in this regard is highlighted by the explanation of 28 percent of the variance in students' attitudes toward viewing a lot of TV by using six measures taken on parents (Table 3). Hence media attitudes and use may indeed be partially explained by the family socialization process.

The greater amount of variance explained by a measure such as a person's attitude toward viewing a lot of TV compared with the attitude measures of ratings on news coverage (where variance explained was less than 20 percent) may say something about the usefulness of general evaluative measures as opposed to a more specific performance rating ("In terms of quality of news, rate a medium's performance from poor to

excellent") which is subject to differences in time and place (the media in a specific location, their coverage of a particular election campaign).

There is a need in future research for more refined measures of parental input into child media use patterns, and a need for a wider range of measures, perhaps including the further use of the Chaffee et al., (1971) family communication typologies. However, the present study extends this area of research to parents and offspring of college age, and highlights the importance of parental attitudes toward the media as well as their media use behavior, in determining children's media socialization.

In studying university students, who to a very large degree are not living at home, we have found evidence against the "opportunity" hypothesis, and in favor of the "socialization" hypothesis. Whereas Chaffee et al., (1971) studied children in the home and suggested that behavioral similarities might be due to opportunity rather than influence, our study of students not living at home indicates that similarities could be attributed to socialization rather than opportunity.

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Appendix A

1. In the last week, about how many hours a day, if any, have you watched television?
2. And what about TV news, how many days did you watch any TV news program in the last seven days?
3. How many hours a day, if any, have you listened to radio in the past week?
4. And what about radio news? How many days did you listen to one or more radio news broadcasts in the last seven days?
5. How many days of the week if any do you usually read a daily newspaper?
6. How many days, if any, in the last seven have you read news about current events in a daily newspaper?
7. How many magazines do you read on a regular basis?
8. How many of these are newsmagazines?
9. In terms of quality of news, generally, how would you rate each of the following on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is very poor and 10 is excellent?

	Very Poor										Don't Know
	Excellent										
Television	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Newsmagazines	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Radio	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Newspapers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

Appendix A (Cont'd)

10. Overall, would you say that viewing a lot of television is:

Very harmful	Harmful	Both harmful and beneficial
Very beneficial	Don't know	

11. As far as you can remember, about how much control would you say you exercise(d) over you children's television viewing? Would you say:

Quite a bit	Some	A little	None at all	Don't Know
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12. How about newspapers? How much influence would you say you had on your childrens' newspaper reading?

Quite a bit	Some	A little	None at all	Don't Know
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13. How often did you discuss politics in your family while your children were (have been) growing up:

Never	Very seldom	Seldom	Sometimes
Often	Very Often	Don't Know	

14. How active have you been in politics generally? Would you say:

Not at all	Very little	Somewhat	A lot
Quite a lot	Don't Know		

15. Would you classify yourself on economic issues as:

Very				Very	
Conservative	Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	Liberal	Don't know

16. What about on social issues, would you say you are:

Very				Very	
Conservative	Conservative	Moderate	Liberal	Liberal	Don't Know